

**CLAIMS**

1. An operating process for an active node (1) suitable for the processing of data packets by executing a program contained or identified in an active packet, this program being intended to control data packet processing functions, characterised in that it includes the following steps:
  - a) reception of an active packet;
  - b) execution of a request contained in the active packet, and intended to configure packet processing functions;
  - c) execution of a program contained or identified in the active packet, and intended to control data packet processing functions, this program being executed after the execution of this request.
2. A process according to claim 1, characterised in that step b includes the putting in place of a packet filter.
- 15 3. A process according to claim 2, characterised in that step b) is followed by a step for the receipt and storage of packets corresponding to the filter, for at least as long as step c has not been implemented.
4. A process according to claim 1, characterised in that said active packet should be sent to an network address, this process including, after step b), a step for sending of the active packet to said address.
- 20 5. A process according to claim 1, characterised in that said active packet should be sent to an network address, this process including a step for sending of the active packet to said address either after step b) or after step c), depending on the request contained in the active packet.
- 25 6. A process according to claim 1, characterised in that step b includes an operation for the dimensioning of a packet storage queue.

7. A process according to claim 1, characterised in that step b) includes an operation for reading, from the active packet, the parameters for running the program.
  8. A process according to claim 1, characterised in that step c) includes an operation for the downloading of a program identified in the active packet.
- 5 9. An active node (1) suitable for the processing of data packets by executing a program contained or identified in an active packet, this program being intended to control data packet processing functions, characterised in that it includes the means for:
- a) receipt of an active packet;
  - b) execution of a request contained in the active packet, and intended to configure packet processing functions;
  - c) and execution of a program contained or identified in the active packet, and intended to control data packet processing functions, this program being executed after the execution of this request.
- 10 15 10. A data packet, characterised in that it includes:
- a request intended to be executed in an active node to configure packet processing functions, before the execution of a program controlling packet processing functions;
  - and a program or an identifier for a program, this program being intended to be executed at an active node in order to control packet processing functions, after the execution of the request.
- 20 11. A data packet according to claim 11, of the IP type, in which said program or said program identifier, and said request, are placed in the options of the IP packet.